

**Chief of Naval Operations
Adm. Jonathan Greenert**

**John Glenn Christening Remarks
San Diego**

1 February 2014

Adm. Greenert: Every now and again I get this great opportunity to attend a christening or a commissioning, and I hate coming after Sean Stackley. [Laughter]. What am I going to do about that?

I have to confess that I am a whiner. I am whining. I was whining this morning. We got here yesterday and I came down here because I figured Fred and Kevin didn't have much going on so I thought I'd stop in. We passed some of the two biggest lies that people -- especially coming from Washington headquarters, Navy headquarters. I said, "Fred, it's good to be here. I'm here to help." And Fred said, "John, I'm glad to have you here." So we got over that. [Laughter].

This morning I came down -- Again, I'm taking in the [inaudible] myself. So I was standing down here on the pier, got here just a little bit early, and with the dark suit on, the sun on my back. I'm up here like this -- oh, this feels so good. And this nice worker came over and said, "Reverend," -- [Laughter]
"-- this [ship]?" I said, "No, what are you charging?" "What do you do?" I said, "Well, I'm the Chief of Naval Operations." It wasn't impressive at all. I said, "I'm the customer, I get this ship." And she said, "Well you take good care of that ship." This is Mary, the electrician who I met. Very nice. But she said, "You take good care of that ship. We worked very hard on it, and it's done early and it's done on schedule and on time."

All I'm saying is, this is a proud work force. This is a work force that is very very invested in the things that they deliver. And so we have a good, good system here in place.

Senator Glenn and the Glenn family, and I can say, she is beautiful, isn't she? And I mean Anne. Anne Glenn. She is beautiful. [Applause].

This is the culmination of a lot of vision and hard work and it's really an honor for me to meet a hero. The ships that we have, that we take on in the Navy, they really do take on the personality of their namesake. And the sponsors also, they always, and I'm sure it will happen here, they inspire the crew to remember what their namesake is about. This ship will be, will embody really the ethos and the principles of the namesake.

Senator Glenn, as has been spoken about eloquently by those before me was a true patriot, a bold and fearless leader. Really an icon for all of us Baby Boomers. Excelled as a fighter pilot, an astronaut, a senator, we've said that. A remarkable leader who persevered against all the odds and was really an inspiration for all the Americans.

I remember the journey of 1962 as Shawn and others have laid out here earlier before us, and Sister Mary Francis, St. Paul's School in [inaudible], PA when I was there, rolled the TV down and brought it in, and we all sat there, all us little boys and girls in our uniforms. Remember those? We were there. I'll never forget it. It went through my mind today as I was recharging earlier.

But this did more than just okay, America in space. For all of us, it opened our eyes to an entirely new domain that we like to call a domain. The undersea is a domain. Space and what's possible and what we can do up there. And it's a wonderful thing. We've taken it from there and continue to do it and it's embodied here in [Charlie Bolden] and the things that NASA does for us today.

Marines rightly celebrate Senator Glenn and his warrior spirit. That's good. But I thought I'd point something out. John Glenn, he joined the Navy first. [Laughter]. He tried to join the Army Air Corps, but typically, they never called back. [Laughter]. So he enlisted as a Navy aviation cadet and during advanced training, that's fine, he transferred to our partners, the Marine Corps. That's good. He's a patriot, obviously. He gave the exceptional service that we talked about. He had nautical beginnings, as the namesake of such a fine ship should be, and tremendous service to the Marine Corps as we have attributed to him today. An intrepid nature and a great spirit.

But what the ship does, as I think TK [Shin] laid out very well. This opens for us in the Navy a new chapter of innovation and modularity, and for us, those of us that organize, train and equip and talk about budgets and how can we build this future Navy, we have to get out of our addiction of platforms and the integration, these fine wonderful things. They are important. They're up and down this harbor. But it's more than the platforms. It's the payloads. It's the payloads that we need. What they bring to the different types of missions that we have around the world today, that we need to do today.

This is a giant Swiss Army knife. You can do so many things with it and we have, as TK said, we have really not scratched the surface on this. They'll be flexible and responsive, the John Glenn will be truly vital to our future operations. It's transformational. It can reconfigure for many many different missions. Float on/float off technology. Easy movement of cargo back and forth.

You look at the deck and you say well how big is that? Well, it's about -- You look at the Super Bowl tomorrow, imagine that football field. Add about another half. And think about the humanitarian assistance that you can bring ashore on that, how quickly that can be, how great it would have been to have something like this in the Philippines just a few short months ago. That deck capability will bring 25,000 square foot of cargo space. That's a lot.

And it can travel, it's like going from here to New York and back two times. That's how much persistence and fuel that she'll have. She can go around the globe in 58 days. A little long compared to the five hours, Senator, that you did a while back, but we get that.

But what makes her impressive, again, Mary the electrician today talking to Fred and Kevin and the team they have here. The civilians who have designed this innovative new platform. Our partners. The people who embody and bring together, along with their shipmates at the Navy Yard, NAVSEA, they are the essence of America's sea power. These shipyard workers here, they put out quality, fine ships.

The crew is amazing. The civilian mariners that we have out there today are truly part and parcel of what makes our Navy great and will make our Navy great in the future.

And of course the sailors, marines and the joint force that will embark on the missions, and their families, that wind underneath their wings will make it all come together as we look at our missions in the future.

I want to take just a minute and thank again Congresswoman Davis and Congressman Peters for your support for bringing together the funding to do this and for getting us this built. It's going to get a little busy around here, busier than you've seen. It's going to get loud, I'm sorry about that, but you say that's okay, because we'll be flying a lot more, we'll be steaming a lot more, you'll see a lot more ships with shrink wrap around them as we do business today.

You'll also see, if you look behind you, imagine the ship, the third ship of this class being built. Imagine what we have behind me with a flight deck on it. Imagine what more that will offer for rotary wing, back and forth helicopters, and some of the newer aircraft that we will have that we will be putting together as we bring this class into the fleet.

But first, thank you again, Senator Glenn, for your service. It's an honor and privilege to be accepting a ship with your name. I congratulate you, and I congratulate our builders, our shipmates who brought this under budget and brought it on time, but she'll sail ahead of time.

Captain Rathbun congratulations to you, and I wish you the very best, and I look forward to working with you as we bring the ship.

God bless the John Glenn, the United States of America, and all of you. Thanks so much.

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